



Greetings from the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration

Although I cannot be with you today, I am pleased to join with the Filipino community in Hamilton in welcoming the Philippine Ambassador to Canada, His Excellency Jose S. Brillantes, on his first official visit to Hamilton.

The Filipino community is an important and growing community in Canada. Filipinos have been immigrating to Canada for more than half a century. In this time Canada has developed the second-largest Filipino community in the world outside the Philippines - many of whom have become solid, hard working Canadian citizens.

Filipinos continue to fill an increasing demand for labour in the Canadian economy. This is why Canada is adding more resources to our offices in Manila, to keep abreast of the ever-increasing flow of people from the Philippines to Canada. Beginning this summer, three additional Canada-based Immigration Officers and four locally-engaged staff will be added to work at the Embassy.

Canada was built on immigration and our future prosperity depends on it. In fact, by 2012, all of our labour force growth will come from immigration.

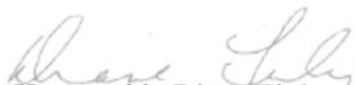
Immigration also gives us the chance to share different perspectives that make Canada stronger. Beyond benefiting Canadian employers and our economy, immigration from the Philippines has helped to build links between families in our two countries.

I would like to congratulate the Filipino community in Hamilton for organizing this event today. Such efforts help to demonstrate the valued relationship between Canada and the Philippines and

I am pleased to note that CIC representatives are joining you to take part in your sessions.

On behalf of the Government of Canada and Prime Minister Stephen Harper, please accept my wishes for a successful day.

Yours truly,


The Honourable Diane Finley, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Citizenship and Immigration